



## CPS Disposition Guidelines for Suicide Deaths

### Factors to consider

- CPS should always consider the totality of the circumstances.
- A portion of the investigation should involve developing a timeline for each person that was present when the incident occurred.
- Police or Medical Examiners report - Law enforcement may consider the death a suicide; however, CPS can still make a finding for abuse/neglect.
- Collaterals should be used and assessed as they are in any investigation.

### General Issues to Consider in Decision Making

- Child's age
- Child's maturity and capability
- Parent's/Caregiver's awareness of child's mental health issues
- Obvious signs (such as suicide statement) of potential suicide and the parent/caregiver does not seek help
- Parent's protective arrangements for the child
- Professional made parent/caregiver aware of the mental health issues concerning the child and the parent/caregiver fails to seek help
- Prior family suicide history or suicidal threats
- Parent/Caregiver mental health status
- Home and social environment
- Review of CPS and criminal history

### Would most likely result in a RTB

- Professional made parent/caregiver aware of the mental health issues concerning the child and the parent/caregiver fail to seek help
- Parent/caregiver was told the child was suicidal and they failed to seek help
- Child indicated prior to his/her death (in writing or verbally to another person) that the suicide was due to prior/current abuse/neglect and the investigation confirms the likelihood of the abuse/neglect.

### Would most likely result in a UTD

- Someone stated the child had talked about suicide and the parent/caregiver denied knowing
- Child stated the intent to commit suicide was due to prior or current abuse/neglect but the investigation could not confirm the likelihood of occurrence

### More Guidelines

- Firearm deaths (<http://intranet/CPS/CSS/Disposition/firearms.asp>)
- Children dying while left unattended in a vehicle (<http://intranet/CPS/CSS/Disposition/vehicle.asp>)
- Deaths involving co-sleeping (<http://intranet/CPS/CSS/Disposition/co-sleeping.asp>)
- Drowning (<http://intranet/CPS/CSS/Disposition/drowning.asp>)





## CPS Disposition Guidelines for Deaths involving Co-sleeping

***The agency position: Co-sleeping without any other issues is not abuse/neglect.***

### Factors to consider

- CPS should always consider the totality of the circumstances
- Co-Sleeping without any other issues is not abuse/neglect
- A portion of the investigation should involve developing a timeline for each person that was present when the incident occurred.
- Police or Medical Examiners report - Law enforcement may consider a co-sleeping related death an accident. However, CPS can still make a finding for abuse/neglect even if Law Enforcement considers the death an accident.
- Collaterals should be used and assessed as they are in any investigation

### General Issues to Consider in Decision Making

- Infant or young child's age
- Infant or young child's special medical condition
- Parent's/caregiver's use of illegal drugs and alcohol while sleeping with the infant or young child
- Parent's/caregiver's use of prescribed medications that are known to cause drowsiness, alter their state of mind, or interfere with their judgment
- Number of adults and other children sleeping in the same bed or other sleep surface with an infant
- Prior history of co-sleeping related deaths
- Review of CPS and criminal history
- Cultural beliefs
- Family practice

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### Would most likely result in a RTB

- Parent/caregiver under the influence\* of illegal drugs or alcohol while sleeping with the infant or young child
- Parent/caregiver under the influence\* of prescription medication that he/she has used previously and is aware it causes drowsiness, alters their state of mind, or interferes with their judgment while sleeping with the infant or young child
- Doctor has told the parent/caregiver that they should not sleep with the infant or young child because of the infant or young child's respiratory condition or other medical condition that could possibly impair their ability to breathe.

\* "Under the influence" should be interpreted as sufficient enough to be impaired.

### Would most likely result in a UTD

- Insufficient information about the parent/caregiver's use of illegal drugs or alcohol while they were co-sleeping with the infant or young child. (ex. Collateral states the parent/caregiver abuse drugs/alcohol but they test negative.)
- Multiple persons sleeping on the same bed or sleep surface with the infant or young child that creates overcrowding on the sleep surface.

### Would most likely result in a RO

- Parent/caregiver advised of safe sleep conditions (by medical professional or other professional) and continued to co-sleep with the infant or young child and the infant or young child dies (no other factors present)

- Parent/caregiver was under the influence of prescription drug and they were unaware of the side effects (drowsiness, alter their state of mind, or interfere with their judgment)

## More Guidelines

- Firearm deaths (<http://intranet/CPS/CSS/Disposition/firearms.asp>)
- Children dying while left unattended in a vehicle (<http://intranet/CPS/CSS/Disposition/vehicle.asp>)
- Drowning (<http://intranet/CPS/CSS/Disposition/drowning.asp>)
- Suicide (<http://intranet/CPS/CSS/Disposition/suicide.asp>)



## CPS Disposition Guidelines for Drowning Deaths

***Reminder: Drowning can involve any body of water including ponds, swimming pools, buckets of water, toilets, tubs, etc.***

### Factors to consider

- CPS should always consider the totality of the circumstances.
- A portion of the investigation should involve developing a timeline for each person that was present when the incident occurred.
- Police or Medical Examiners report - Law enforcement may consider a drowning incident an accident. However, CPS can still make a finding for abuse/neglect even if Law Enforcement considers the death an accident.
- Collaterals should be used and assessed as they are in any investigation

### General Issues to Consider in Decision Making

- Child's age
- Child's maturity and capability (ability to swim also assessed)
- Proximity of parent/caregiver or other responsible adult
- Child's mental, physical or medical disability, if any
- Activity level of child requires close supervision
- Frequency of parent/caregiver inattention
- Length of time left alone, unattended
- Overall safety of surroundings (pool vs pond, gates locked, lifeguard on duty, etc)
- Number and ages of children left unsupervised
- Arrangements parent/caregiver have made to ensure child's safety during parent/caregiver's absence
- A previous bodily injury or substantial risk of immediate harm
- Parent/caregiver's mental, physical, or medical disability, if any
- Parent/caregiver awareness of potential danger
- Parent/caregiver under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Review of prior CPS and criminal history

### Would most likely result in a RTB

- Illegal drug usage contributed to the event
- Abuse of legal/prescription drugs
- Prior knowledge of how drugs affect the parent/caregiver
- Excessive use of alcohol (enough to be considered physically impaired)
- Inappropriate person designated as caregiver of the child
- A pattern of inattentiveness on the part of the parent/caregiver
- Parent/caregiver is unrealistic about the child's abilities
- No security in place or being used to protect the child from the body of water
- Parent/caregiver deliberately involved in other activities while child is in the water
- Infant left in bathtub unattended for any amount of time (0-12 mos)
- Toddler left in bathtub unattended for any amount of time (12-36 mos)
- Failure to follow posted regulations pertaining to swimming area (i.e. at a pool or body of water - no swimming in this area, no children under age 10, etc)

**Would most likely result in a RO or UTD**

- Parent/caregiver is using legal or prescribed drugs but was not familiar with side affects prior to using
- Several layers of security are in place and are being used but child makes it to the body of water anyway
- Parent/caregiver were unaware that the child could open the door to access the body of water
- Parent/caregiver has made adequate/appropriate arrangements with a responsible person to care for the child and the child drowns while with that person
- Circumstances beyond the control of the parent/caregiver/caregiver (i.e. older child unsupervised at a pool)

**More Guidelines**

- Firearm deaths (<http://intranet/CPS/CSS/Disposition/firearms.asp>)
- Children dying while left unattended in a vehicle (<http://intranet/CPS/CSS/Disposition/vehicle.asp>)
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## CPS Disposition Guidelines for Firearm Deaths

### Factors to consider

- CPS should always consider the totality of the circumstances.
- The investigation should involve developing a timeline for each person that was present when the incident occurred.
- Police or Medical Examiners report - CPS can make a finding for abuse/neglect even if Law Enforcement considers the death an accident.
- Collaterals should be used and assessed as they are in any investigation.

### General Issues to Consider in Decision Making

- Possession of a gun in a home is a right by law and is not a factor to consider.
- Child's age
- Child's maturity and capability
- Parent's/Caregiver's awareness of child's mental health issues
- Parent/Caregiver's protective arrangements for the child
- Parent/Caregiver's awareness of potential danger
- Parent/Caregiver mental health status
- Household members awareness of "gun safety".
- Parent/Caregiver under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Home and social environment
- Review of CPS and criminal history

### Would most likely result in a RTB

- The weapon was unsecured and loaded and a child unable to understand the danger of firearms and had access to it
- Parent/Caregiver did not take the necessary steps to keep a gun secured when they knew the child had mental health issues
- Parent/Caregiver intentionally fires a gun at a child or uses the child as a shield

### Would most likely result in a RO

- Death was clearly an accident, i.e. hunting, holding gun and tripped, etc.
- Parent/Caregiver of child was cleaning the gun and believed the gun to be empty
- Parent/Caregiver took care to separate the gun from the ammunition
- Parent/Caregiver took care to secure the gun (in a gun safe, used gun lock, etc) and child bypassed the security
- Firearm was kept in a place that a reasonable person\* would deem not easily accessible to children

*\* when defining "reasonable person," personal values should not be a consideration*

### Would most likely result in a UTD

- Conflicting information is received during the investigation and there is no way to determine which information is accurate.

## More Guidelines

- Children dying while left unattended in a vehicle (<http://intranet/CPS/CSS/Disposition/vehicle.asp>)
- Deaths involving co-sleeping (<http://intranet/CPS/CSS/Disposition/co-sleeping.asp>)
- Drowning (<http://intranet/CPS/CSS/Disposition/drowning.asp>)
- Suicide (<http://intranet/CPS/CSS/Disposition/suicide.asp>)





## **CPS Disposition Guidelines for Children Dying while left Unattended in a Vehicle**

### **Factors to consider**

- CPS should always consider the totality of the circumstances
- A portion of the investigation should involve developing a timeline for each person that was present when the incident occurred.
- Police or Medical Examiners report - Law enforcement may consider the death an accident; however, CPS can still make a finding for abuse/neglect even if Law Enforcement considers the death an accident.
- Collaterals should be used and assessed as they are in any investigation

### **General Issues to Consider in Decision Making**

- Child's age
- Child's maturity and capability
- Parent's/caregiver's under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Parent's/caregiver's under the influence of prescribed medications that are known to cause drowsiness, alter their state of mind, or interfere with their judgment
- Parent's/Caregiver's deliberateness/pattern of inattention
- Frequency of parent's/caregiver's inattention
- Prior history of this happening
- Proximity of parent/caregiver or other responsible adult
- Length of time left alone
- Miscommunication on who was responsible for removing the child from the car
- Review of CPS and criminal history

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### **Would most likely result in a RTB:**

- Child left alone and dies regardless of the explanation

### **Would most likely result in a UTD:**

- Parent is unexpectedly physically incapacitated by serious health issue

### **More Guidelines**

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